**Reading Comprehension—Writing Thesis Statements**

1. The Whiskey Rebellion was a milestone in determining the limits on public opposition to federal policies. In the early 1790s, many Americans still assumed it was legitimate to protest unpopular laws using the same tactics with which they had blocked parliamentary measures like the Stamp Act. Indeed, western Pennsylvanians had justified their resistance with exactly such reasoning. Before 1794 the question of how far the people might go in resisting federal laws remained unresolved because, as Washington declared, “We had given no testimony to the world of being able or willing to support our government and laws.” But by firmly suppressing the first major challenge to national authority, Washington served notice that if citizens wished to change the law, they could do so only through constitutional procedures - by making their dissatisfaction known to their elected representatives and if necessary electing new representatives.

2. Taney’s thunderclap rocked the free-soilers back on their heels. A majority of the court had decreed that because a slave was private property, he or she could be taken into any territory and held there. The reasoning was that the Fifth Amendment clearly forbade Congress to deprive persons of their property without due process of law. The Court, to be consistent, went further. The Missouri Compromise, banning slavery north of 36-30, had been repealed three years earlier by the Kansas-Nebraska Act. But its spirit was still venerated in the North. Now the Court had rule that the Compromise of 1820 had been unconstitutional all along: Congress had no power to ban slavery from the territories, regardless even of what the territorial legislatures themselves might want.

3. The country was divided first by distinct and separate regions. The regional differences between the North and South that originated in the colonial period persisted and even increased during the early nineteenth century. The Northern states continued down the path of economic diversification, with mixed farming, commerce, fishing, and manufacturing. The North’s denser population and relatively board distribution of wealth generated a growing demand for consumer goods. Moreover, the kinds of commodities produced in the North - grain, dried fish, forest and manufactured goods - created jobs and stimulated support industries. The production of dried fish, for example, required boats and nets, salt and barrels, sails and docks. Finally, the region’s topography, combining agricultural lands, rapidly flowing rivers, and easy access to the sea, promoted economic diversification.

4. In 1820, Congress achieved compromise over sectional difference. Henry Clay forged the fist of the many agreements that would earn him the title of “The Great Pacificator” (peacemaker). A glance at the map shows the state of Missouri as an awkward intrusion into an otherwise slave-free area, a visual break in the smooth western continuation of sectionalism. This visual impression is reflected in the Missouri Compromise itself, which was difficult to arrange and had an awkward air about it. The compromise maintained the balance between slave and free states: Maine (which had been part of Massachusetts) was admitted as a free state in 1820 and Missouri as a slave state in the following year. A policy was also enacted with respect to slavery in the rest of the Louisiana Purchase: slavery was prohibited north of 36-30 north latitude - the southern boundary of Missouri - and permitted south of that line. This meant that the vast majority of the Louisiana Territory would be free. In reality then, the Missouri Compromise could only be a temporary solution, because it left open the question of how the balance between slave and free states could be maintained.

5. The consequences of the development of this transportation network were far reaching. One of the immediate results was the stimulation of the settlement of the Northwest, not only because it had become easier for migrants to make the western journey but also, and more important, because it had become easier for them, after establishing their farms, to ship their produce to markets. Towns boomed along the Erie and other canals. New York City benefited the most of all. Although much of the Western produce, especially corn, continued to go down river to New Orleans, an increasing proportion of it (including most of the wheat of the Northwest) went to New York. And manufactured goods from throughout the East now moved in growing volume through New York and then via the comparatively direct and economical routes to the West.

**Write one clear, concise, well developed thesis statement which expresses the main idea of each of the above paragraphs.**